

THE PRESIDENCY/HUGH SIDNEY

Tackling the Bumbling Bureaucracy

When Jerry Ford comes home this week from his circuit of European political palaces, he will be right back in beautiful downtown America, which is broke, hot, surly and drinking beer rather than champagne.

For all of that soaring rhetoric on peace that comes prepackaged with a presidential tour abroad, the nation's destiny—and Ford's—ultimately rests on what happens in New York, Detroit, Chicago and even Burbank.

Ford knows that as well as anybody. So right now there is a thick notebook in the White House office of Jim Cannon, director of the Domestic Council, with literally scores of domestic proposals that have poured in from Cabinet officers and agency heads for three months. They range from rebuilding country sewers to rescuing the Penn Central railroad.

On June 10 Ford will gather around him the 19 members of the Domestic Council—the first such meeting of that group since 1971—and they will begin to assemble a plan for America. It is not going to be a tidy thing like those blueprints that Henry Kissinger produces for the world. It may end up more of a state of Jerry Ford's mind than anything else, but therein lies the immediate future of the U.S.

Almost anyone can compile the list of pressing specifics: jobs, energy, environment, transportation, crime, welfare reform, city decay, land use, tax reform, education. But swimming up now through

the mass of information in Cannon's office (the same one where John Ehrlichman used to strangle ideas) is a larger notion, not new but suddenly of such urgency that it may set the tone and direction of most of Ford's future. It is that the bumbling, insensitive, suffocating Federal Government has become too often an adversary of the people and not a help and is unnecessarily diminishing individual freedom, competition and the quality of American life.

"The subject of encroaching bureaucratic control used to make people's eyes glaze over," says Cannon. "I don't think so any longer." Cannon wandered through some Midwestern cities with his ears open. He was astonished at how many people vented their anger and concern about federal intervention. A bank in St. Louis lost thousands of dollars in business just because a Government agent came around to check on whether or not

the place was hiring enough women. The simple presence of the Government gumshoe made a number of customers wonder if something else was wrong with the bank. A frustrated university president told Cannon that he needed federal money but the restrictions now placed on its use violated the whole concept of excellence.

In the files of the Domestic Council is a study from 1937 predicting that the Interstate Commerce Commission would mean the demise of the railroads. Cannon remembers writing something like that again in 1954 when he was a journalist. And so today the railroads are almost moribund just like the script, but the ICC goes on.

Cannon sees this problem as part of the spiritual malaise in this country. When one's freedom of action is so restricted, when the right to pursue excellence is too heavily curtailed, then "the enthusiasm for doing things is diminished."

There is a curious contradiction: while the alarm rises over the size and reach of the federal monster, the chorus of people wanting help also rises. Not long ago, a Texas farmer got a call through to one of the White House aides and bellowed that his survival depended on higher support prices, that only Ford could save him. The lineup of supplicants outside the White House door in the past few months has included more industrialists than labor leaders, more of the affluent than the destitute.

Ford has already ventured into this difficult terrain between proper concern and overdependence on Government. When New York's Mayor Abe Beame came down to ask federal help for his faltering city, Ford was so determined to say no fairly but firmly that he worked over every word in his turndown even as the *Mayaguez* crisis swirled around him. There is going to be a lot more of those rejections in Ford's future, and ours.



"Ahem! If you boys could spare a minute..."

CIA

Mafia Spies in Cuba

It is well known that when the CIA had dirty work to do in Cuba, it turned to an organization that had long tentacles around that country: the Mafia. In 1961 the CIA, according to reliable sources, put out a contract to Mafia Leaders Sam Giancana and John Roselli for the assassination of Fidel Castro (TIME, March 17). In a separate and equally futile action, TIME has learned, the CIA enlisted other Mafia figures to do some spying in Cuba in preparation for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

The Mafiosi were Russell Bufalino, now the mob boss in Scranton, Pa., and two lesser fry: James Plumeri and Salvatore ("Sally Burns") Granello, of New York City. Before Castro overthrew Dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, the three men controlled a race track and a huge gambling casino near Havana. When Castro took power, he banished the three. The trio left behind \$450,000, which they asked friends to hold for them. The money, the take from the casino's last days, belonged to Mafia clans in New York, Chicago and Pittsburgh.

One Road. When the CIA was planning the Bay of Pigs invasion, its agents learned about the \$450,000 and reckoned that Bufalino, Plumeri and Granello would be anxious to get even with Castro. The agency asked the three to use their contacts in Cuba to assess the chances that an invasion would set off a popular uprising against Castro. The CIA also assigned the Mafia to pinpoint the roads that Castro might use to deploy troops and tanks in meeting attacking forces. Bufalino, Plumeri and Granello ordered their old contacts on the island to set up a small network of spies and authorized part of the \$450,000 to be used for paying them.

But the spies helped neither the Mafiosi nor the CIA. The information they turned up, says one knowing source, "was a lot of garbage. They claimed that they had found that an insurrection was in the works, but, of course, it never came off. And you didn't need spies to tell you about the roads. There was only one road to the beach that Castro could have used."

The Mafia trio had good reason to encourage the invasion: if Castro fell, they had a chance not only to retrieve what was left of the \$450,000 but possibly to return to their lucrative business in Havana. In addition, Plumeri and Granello had secretly left behind another \$300,000, which they had got by short-changing the mob on the take from the gambling casino. The money was buried in a field outside Havana.

Both Granello and Plumeri later were victims of gangland murders in New York City. Until their executions, both men fretted over the thought of their greenbacks slowly rotting in the Cuban earth.